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The Methodist Preacher - 1844

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FROM

Elizabeth H. Bartol

No. 1.

THE

METHODIST PREACHER,

OR,

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

IN THE

LIFE OF AN ITINERANT.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. HARMSTEAD, No. 38½ NORTH FOURTH STREET.

J. VAN COURT, PRINTER, QUARRY ST. NEAR SECOND.
1844.

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April 12, 1921
Elizabeth H. Bartol

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How the manuscript from which the following pages have been printed came into the hands of the publisher, need not here be told. Of the genuineness of the narrative, those most familiar with the trying duties of a Methodist Itinerant Preacher, can best judge. It has been sketched by one who is evidently no stranger to the subject he has presented. Should this first part be well received, further extracts from the journal will be given, in no way inferior to this in interest.

THE METHODIST PREACHER:

OR,

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS IN THE LIFE OF AN ITINERANT.

Close of the Conference Year.—So ends my labor in this quarter of the Lord's vineyard. A whole year has run around, since, in his good providence, my lot was cast among the people in this section. Have I been faithful to my trust? Alas, no! I am never as faithful as I should be. When will I cease to mourn over short-comings and neglected duties? How infirmity clings to us poor mortals! I find, on examination, that fifty souls have been added to the church, during the year. Thank God for even this number! But it ought to have been double, and no doubt would, if I had been instant in season and out of season in the discharge of my duties.

My dear good wife seems more than usually depressed at the idea of leaving the many kind friends who have endeared themselves to her by good offices during the year. Little Mary said to me this morning, "Pa, we ain't agoing away from this nice house, are we? I don't want to go away and leave my little garden, and pussy, and the chickens, and my sweet pet lamb. Why don't we live here always? I'd rather live here. It's the best place we ever lived in." My heart was so full that I couldn't answer the dear child. But I took her up into my arms, and kissed her soft lips. "Mamma's been crying, and now you are crying too." A tear had stolen out in spite of all I could do to keep it back. "Don't cry, Pa! I'll love you so, and never be naughty." The tears were already gushing from her bright eyes. "You are a good girl. You are not naughty," I said, in a soothing voice, pressing her wet cheek to my own, and drawing my lips tightly together as I swallowed rapidly to keep down a rising sob. How weak I am sometimes! As I grow older, I believe I become more and more like a child. Instead of drying up the fountain of tears, time seems only to make an accumulation of waters.

It is hard enough for *me* to break the bands of love that a year's tender intercourse with the people has thrown around my heart. But this I could bear if other and gentler hearts than mine were not made to suffer; if other and dearer ties than those I have formed had not to be broken. My wife is warm in her attachments. She loves companionship.

On every new circuit where our changing lot is cast, she forms intimate friendships with those who are of a like spirit with herself, if such are to be found. Sometimes she meets none to whom she can open her heart of hearts—none who can sympathize with her. But here it has been very different. She has found companions and friends—lovers of the good, the true, the beautiful, with whom she has often taken sweet counsel. To part with these, and go where and among whom she cannot tell, is, indeed, a hard trial. I passed through her room a little while ago, and saw her sitting by the bed, leaning her arm upon it, with her head upon her hand, and looking pensively out upon the beautiful landscape that stretched far away in varied woodland, meadow, glittering stream, and distant mountain. There was a tear upon her cheek. This little messenger from within, telling of a sad heart, touched my feelings.

"Mary," I said, sitting down by her side, and taking her hand in one of mine, while with the other I pointed upward, "HE will go with us, and HE is our best and kindest friend. If we would wear the crown, we must endure the cross. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* We are only pilgrims and sojourners here—but our mission is a high and holy one—even to save the souls of our fellowmen. Think of that, Mary. Would you linger here when our Master calls us away to labor somewhere else in his vineyard. Think of the Lord when upon earth. Remember how he suffered for us. Hear him say, *The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.* And shall the servant be greater than his Master?"

"I know I am a poor, weak, murmuring creature;" she said, laying her head back upon my bosom, and looking up into my face with overflowing eyes. "But I pray daily for grace to make me more resigned to His holy will. I do not wish to remain here while I know that it is the Lord who calls us away. Still, my weak heart cannot help feeling pain at the thought of parting from our dear little home, and our good friends who have been so kind to us, and going, I know not whither. My woman's heart is weak, while my faith is strong. And after all," she added, with a brightening face, and a more cheerful voice, "perhaps it may please Him that you may be appointed to a station instead of a circuit. You have been on circuits now for seven years."

"Hush, Mary!" I said quickly, laying my fingers over her mouth. "These are temptations of the flesh. The Lord does not regard our external good, but our salvation, and the salvation of precious souls. If it is good for us, spiritually, and for the good of others, that I receive a station, our lot will be cast in some town or city. But if otherwise, then I shall have to take another circuit. In either event, the Lord's goodness must be praised by us, for his goodness and mercy has followed and will follow us to the end of life."

"How weak and simple I am," was Mary's reply.

'Weaker than a bruised reed,
Help, I every moment need!'

But, in you, I have one ever prompt to recall my thoughts back to duty. Why should I ever forget myself? Why should I ever forget to pray in the words of a sweet hymn—

'Let every murmuring thought, and vain,
Expire, in sweet confusion lost;
I cannot of my cross complain,
I cannot of my goodness boast.'

Or,

'Close by thy side, Oh may I keep,
Howe'er life's various currents flow—
With stedfast eye mark every step,
And follow thee where'er I go!'"

"Yes, Mary, let us ever thus pray, and he will hide us in the cleft of the rock, while the storm rages in the sky, so that it shall not harm us. The peace that passeth all understanding shall be ours, if we faint not, by the way."

"I know it—I know it! Be still my poor, weak heart!" she replied in a low murmur. "Thus far the Lord has been better to me than all my fears. Why, then, should I hold back, and feel so reluctant to enter the path His wisdom points out? I know, if he were to lead me to prison or to death, that it would be for my good. If he were to slay me, yet would I put my trust in him. Still, while my spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Pray for me that I may be endowed with more grace."

"Yes, Mary, you shall have, you always *do* have my poor prayers. Keep her, Heavenly Father in the way! Make smooth for her the rough paths of peevish nature. Fold her as a tender lamb in thy bosom. Hide her beneath the shadow of thy wing. Be to her like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And to thy servant grant grace, that he may feel no anxiety about the future. Though rough and thorny be the way in which it may be thy good pleasure to have me walk, 'My strength proportion to my day.'"

Day after to-morrow I must leave for P—— to attend the annual Conference. I have already found a purchaser for my horse—how I regret to part with the patient, faithful animal, that has borne me so safely round and round my circuit for a year! But I think I have found him a good master, though the price obtained is not over two-thirds what he cost me, and this sum will be far from adequate, I fear, for the purchase of another horse when I get on my new circuit—a circuit, I suppose, it will be, for I have not talents popular enough for cities. I preach too plain and pointed. But no matter—some of us must go into the highways and byways to call sinners to repentance, and I am no better than my brethren. There! some one has just knocked at the door below. I must go down and see who it is.

It was one of the stewards. He rode over about six miles this morning to bring me my quarterage. He is a kind-hearted man, and has always been my friend. He seemed to regret much that the sum was so small. Only fifty dollars, making, in all, just two hundred and twenty-five dollars in money during the year, and I with a wife and two little ones to support. But, then, many loads of wood, and bags of potatoes, and bushels of corn, and other substantial matters were sent in, just at the right moments. I did hope, very much, that the sum would have been seventy-five, or one hundred dollars, seeing that the other payments had been so small; for I owe several little bills about, which must be paid before I go away. There is the shoemaker's bill, $10; and the money for pasturing our cow last winter is still to be settled. Besides, the doctor hasn't been paid. I don't know what his bill will amount to. We have had a good deal of sickness, and he has been very attentive. He doesn't belong to our church, and I don't know how he will feel. Then our maid's wages, for two months, are due, and there is a bill against me down at the store that I am almost afraid to ask for. All these will take away nearly the whole amount of quarterage I have received, and leave but little for the Doctor; to say nothing of what it is going to cost us to get to conference, a distance of nearly one hundred and fifty miles.

* * * *

I have just been to the store and paid my bill. It was twenty dollars! How rapidly little things accumulate into formidable aggregates. I did not think the charges there

could possibly be above ten or twelve dollars —and yet, in looking over the items, I perceived that they were all correct,—and to my self-condemnation, recognized two or three charges for things not absolutely needed, and which, if I had been going to pay the cash, I would not have bought. This plan of running up bills at the store, I have made resolutions against more than a dozen times in my life. It is a bad system, and has in it divers temptations. It is so easy to get a thing when you don't have to pay for it on the spot. But settling the bill is never such easy work. It is plain enough that, after paying all my other bills, I shall have nothing left for the doctor. I had to sell our cow six weeks ago. She went dry, and we could not afford to keep so unprofitable a servant. The money she brought is all gone. The forty dollars I got for my horse I must not touch, if I can possibly keep it. That sum must be reserved for the purchase of another horse when I get to my new appointment; for, a methodist preacher might as well be without his license as his horse. Our two feather-beds and bedding must not be sold. We shall want them wherever we go. I shall write to brother S—— as soon as the appointments are known, to send the boxes in which I shall pack them and our parlor carpet, with a few other things that can be sent in that way, to our new place of abode. Besides these, there is not much in the parsonage that we can call our own. The bedsteads belong to it, and so do the chairs and tables, and the old bureau that stands in our chamber, with sundry other things that I cannot now call over. Perhaps I may get ten dollars for all remaining.

Another day has past, and to-morrow we must take the stage for P——. Every body is paid but the Doctor, and the whole of my last quarterage is gone. If I could only sell the few things we cannot take with us, I might be able to pay him a part of his bill. But nobody wants them. I must ask brother S—— to dispose of them in some way, as soon as he can, and pay over whatever he receives to the doctor. After all, I shall have to spend at least twenty dollars of my horse-money for stage hire for myself and family to P——, if not more. I have never been in so narrow a place before. * * *

Well, I have seen the doctor. May the Lord reward him, for I cannot! *For whoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward.* I went over to the doctor's after dinner, feeling very badly indeed. For a whole year he had faithfully attended to the health of my family—coming in cold and heat, at night or day, in rain or shine, just as there was need —and I had nothing to give him. Was there any justice in this? I was a preacher of righteousness—a reprover of evil in all its forms,—and yet I had received this man's invaluable services for a whole year, and had nothing to pay him. Once I felt so badly that I stopped in the road, turned back, and walked a few paces, determined not to see him, but to go home and write him a long letter, explaining my situation. Conscience, that ready monitor, quickly chid me for this, and I again took my way toward his dwelling. Just then I heard the sound of wheels behind me, and turning, saw the doctor coming down the road in his gig. My heart beat heavily. In a little while he came up, and reigned in his horse as I stopped.

"Good morning, Doctor," I said, in a half audible voice, for I could hardly compel my tongue to do its office.

"Ah, good morning! Good morning!" he returned cheerfully, and with great apparent pleasure at seeing me. "How are you to-day?"

"Quite well, I thank you, Doctor! I am just on my way to your house."

"Indeed! Then get up and take a seat in my gig, for I'm now returning home."

I took a seat by the doctor's side, in silence, and tried to feel easy and assured; but couldn't.

"Some one told me to-day that you were going to leave us very soon," he said, after a few moments.

"Yes," I returned. "This is my last day. I must start to-morrow for Conference."

"So early, indeed! Well, I must say that I am sorry to lose you so soon. I ought to have seen more of you during the year, but professional duties deprive me of much pleasant social intercourse. Where do you expect to go next?"

"We never know that, Doctor," I replied. "We are servants of Conference, and go wherever it directs."

"You have no choice, then?"

"O, no. That wouldn't do. Every one would choose the good circuits and no one the bad ones."

"Very true. But are you always content with your appointments?"

"I try to be, doctor. But my weak flesh rebels sometimes."

"Pardon me,—but what do you usually get in a year?"

"Rarely over three hundred dollars," I said, a little hesitatingly, "and sometimes not more than half that amount. Many unmarried men do not get over thirty or forty dollars in money."

"Is it possible! How much, if I am not asking an improper question, have you received during the past year."

"Just two hundred and twenty-five dollars. But then, I have had many presents of wood, and potatoes, and meal, &c., which have helped me a good deal."

"Two hundred and twenty-five dollars a year," returned the doctor, in a musing tone. "And have you been able to keep out of debt?"

"I have paid off every bill but yours, and it is to get that, that I am now on my way to your house."

My voice trembled as I said this, all I could do to appear calm. I did not wish to work upon the kind old man's sympathies by seeming concerned about his bill, and for this reason I tried hard to appear undisturbed in mind. He made no reply to this, and we rode on for the remaining distance in silence. The doctor was lost in thought about something, probably, I conjectured, as to the chances of his getting even a fifth part of his bill out of a man who had received only two hundred and twenty-five dollars in the year, and had already paid off all his little debts. At length we arrived at his beautiful cottage, around which the old trees clustered, and over which their limbs depended gracefully and protectingly. He showed me into his library, and bade me be seated in his kind manner. He then drew a chair near to me, and said—I shall not soon forget his words—

"I am not attached to any of the churches about here. My profession does not give me much chance of hearing preaching. Some call me an Episcopalian; and perhaps I have some preference for the external forms of that church.—But no matter. I read my Bible daily, and believe it to be the Word of God. The leading article of my faith is, that the Natural should ever serve the Spiritual. That is, that worldly ends and worldly affections, should always yield to, or serve Spiritual ends, and Spiritual affections. That eternal things, and not mere temporal things, should be, primarily, regarded. By this rule, I daily strive to regulate my actions—though often tempted to swerve from it. Will this

serve Natural life or Spiritual life? I ask myself, when about to do any thing. And if the act I have proposed to myself is one that I would not like to see recorded in the book of my life when it is opened in the other world, I compel myself not to do it, no matter how strongly Natural life pleads for the indulgence of some selfish gratification. In all this, I am conscious that I do not conquer in my own strength—for I learn from the Bible that every good and perfect gift is from above; and the power to rise above the strong tendencies of Natural life, is indeed a good gift, and must, therefore, be from above. I therefore acknowledge the Lord as above all, and in all, and the worker of all good that I am enabled to do. Ministers of the Gospel are his servants here in Spiritual things. They are dispensers of his health-giving principles to the soul, as I am of his health-giving principles to the body. While they minister in Spiritual things, I minister in Natural things, and each are alike His servants who in the end heals both in the Natural and Spiritual bodies. Hence, too, I deem it a privilege to make the Natural serve the Spiritual. While, amid privations and self-denials, His ministers in holy things are dispensing to all the healing waters of life, I deem it nothing but a duty as well as a pleasure, to dispense to them and their families the natural remedies that overcome bodily diseases. You owe me nothing, then, my dear, sir. I would not touch a dollar of the poor compensation you and your fellow laborers receive for worlds. I should not like that act written upon my book of life."

I arose from my chair as he ceased speaking, and reaching out my hand, said as I took his, and pressed it hard between both of mine —"Brother—yes, I must call you *brother*— I thank you from my heart of hearts! I came here with a reluctance that I cannot describe, —I had but little left, not even enough to take me to Conference without breaking in upon money reserved from the sale of my horse, to buy another when I got to my next circuit. I had, therefore, no means of paying you, except a little furniture I leave behind, and which I have instructed brother S—— to sell for me. Whatever this might bring, I intended should go towards settling your bill. Ah, sir! you will have your reward! Spiritual life is far more blessed than Natural life."

"I have my reward," was the doctor's calm reply, returning the earnest pressure of my hand. "Think you a few paltry dollars added to my store could give me the delight I this moment experience? No! No!"

Excellent man! I parted with him in tears. His real worth I discovered when about to be separated from him, perhaps forever.

After making all arrangements for leaving the parsonage early in the morning, and holding a little social prayer meeting with a few beloved brethren and sisters who came to bid us farewell, we retired for the night, and slept soundly. At day-dawn we were up. Brother S—— came soon after and took charge of every thing we were leaving behind us. He will do the best for us and render a faithful account.

When all ready to start for the stage office about a mile away, in Brother S——'s dearborn, I missed my dear wife. I called at the foot of the stairs for her, but received no answer. I went up, and entered her chamber, —there she was by the bed side upon her knees; her face buried in her hands, weeping and praying. It was hard to leave that pleasant chamber, endeared to her by many sweet associations. I knelt down by her side, and in a low voice prayed that the Lord would give us both more grace. That he would

make us faithful and obedient servants of his will. Then drawing my arm around her, I assisted her to rise, kissed her tearful face, and pointing upwards said—

> "Our troubles and our trials here,
> Will only make us richer there,
> When we arrive at home."

She laid her head upon my bosom, weeping bitterly. But recovered herself in a little while, and with a calmer face than I believed it possible for her to assume, descended and entered the wagon with the children. She did not venture to look back. Brother S—— drove us over to the stage office. The stage was at the door when we arrived. I went in to book my name and asked for seats for myself, wife and children to P——.

"Yes, sir," said the agent, "Your names are already entered."

"O, no, you must be mistaken," I said. "I have not been here before."

"No matter. Your names are booked, and the passage paid," he replied, handing me the way-bill upon which were entered our names and twenty dollars, the price of passage, marked paid.

"Who has done this?" I asked, looking at the man in surprise.

"One who wished his name not to be told," was the reply.

I stood for a moment in thankful astonishment, and then turned away. I was seated in the stage, wondering in my own mind who could have done that generous act, when the agent came up to the window, after handing the way-bill to the driver, and telling him that his time was up, and said—

"As you are leaving these parts never again, perhaps, to return, I cannot let you go without a word. If I may not tell the man's name, I may, I presume, his profession. He was a doctor."

At that moment the driver's whip cracked, and the horses sprang forward with the stage.

"The doctor!" I mentally ejaculated. "May the Lord reward him as he deserves!"

Conference.—Appointments for the year to be read out to-morrow. I endeavor not to feel any concern, but it is hard to be wholly given up to my Master's will. My poor dear wife is nervously anxious, but tries hard not to let me perceive her real state of mind. We are with a good brother and sister who make our stay in P—— truly pleasant, as far as external things are concerned. Brother H——, the Presiding Elder of —— district, asked me a good many questions yesterday about the increase of the Church on my circuit during the year, and other matters relative to my late charge. There are two or three stations in his District, and all the circuits are pleasant, and contain a good many wealthy members. I wonder why he seemed so interested in me? Last night I preached in —— Church. Brother H—— was there, and so was the Bishop. I tried to do my best, but failed signally. I never was so much in the dark with a subject in my life. The Bishop, I thought, seemed very uneasy. But this may only be imagination. I don't wonder, however, that I couldn't get along; for I thought more of the approval of the Bishop

and brother H——, than I did of saving sinners. Alas! Poor weak human nature!

Some of the brethren have come in, sadly off indeed. Brother L——, who rode the —— circuit, told me, that thirty-two dollars was all the money he received during the whole year. The members of the church in that quarter are mostly poor farmers who receive very little money. They trade their produce at the stores for what they need, or exchange with other farmers their surplus crops for stock, or any thing else they may want. There is very little spiritual life among them. He said he had a very hard time indeed, and pities from his heart whoever may chance to be his successor. A married man on that circuit, he thinks, would stand a chance of starving.

Brother S——, who has had for the last two years excellent places, seems disposed to think that there is a good deal of favoritism used in making the appointments. Two or three young ministers, he said, whom he could name if he chose, made themselves quite intimate with the Bishop, and especially with the Presiding Elders. These would, of course, be well taken care of. They were young men of promising talents, destined to be ornaments to the church. It would not do to send them away off among the mountains, or pine barrens, to hide their light under a bushel. They must be encouraged, or how can we expect to retain them in our connexion?

These remarks of brother S—— grieved me very much. And especially was I grieved at the spirit he seemed to manifest. Our good Bishop, I am sure, could not be influenced by the consideration intimated. His position is certainly a trying one. I should not like to share his anxiety and responsibility. Whatever disposition is made of me, I shall feel satisfied, as I have always done, that it is the Lord who sends me forth—for His providence, I surely believe, guides, governs, and over-rules all the appointments that are made.

Last Day of Conference.—A few hours will decide where I shall go. I wish I could feel no concern. Earnestly did I pray, this morning, that I might be endowed with a spirit of resignation. Mary never seemed so anxious before. Poor Mary! She ought never to have been a minister's wife. Her mind is too shrinking and sensitive. And she has too largely developed, as the Phrenologists would say, the organ of Inhabitiveness. It is for her sake that I feel more and more anxious every year. For her sake I would gladly receive an appointment to some station, if it so pleased my Heavenly Master.

Four o'clock.—It is all over, and I have now a certainty to rest upon. I am appointed to —— circuit among the mountains, two

hundred miles away. Brother T—— who was sent there last year, gives rather a discouraging account of the people and the country. The former are poor, and the latter is wild and thinly settled. Many of the preaching places are fifteen to twenty miles apart. And worse than all, the country is very sickly in the fall. Plenty of game in the woods. But a minister doesn't like to be seen out shooting squirrels and wild turkeys. "Well, Mary," I said, trying to smile with a cheerful air, as I met her on returning home, after Conference had adjourned; "our lot for this year has been settled. No station, of course. I did not expect that." Her countenance fell. Dear soul! She had hoped too fondly that I would be stationed this year—mainly because, then I would be home all the time, instead of being absent three-fourths of the year.

"His will be done," she murmured, looking upward. "The servant must not be greater than his Lord."

"We go to —— circuit," I now said.

"O no, not there, surely!"

"Yes, Mary. There the Bishop has appointed me; and I cannot say no."

The tears stole down her pale cheeks as she leaned her head against my shoulder, and murmured sadly:

"His will be done. He that tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb, will go with us."

"Yes, Mary," I said, drawing my arm around her—"He that was with Daniel in the lion's den, and walked with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, in the furnace, and preserved them amid the flames, so that not even the smell of fire was upon their garments, will go with us. We were wrong to have permitted ourselves to feel so much concern about the future. Will not He who ruleth all things well, take care of us? How happy is our lot to that of the martyrs of old, who were persecuted from city to city, burned with fire, and hunted among the mountains like wild beasts. Truly, when I think of these faithful old servants of the cross, I am ready to put my hands upon my mouth, and my mouth in the dust and cry 'guilty,' —for, truly, compared to their lot, our lines have indeed fallen in pleasant places; we have a goodly heritage."

"But I am most guilty," returned my wife, trying to look cheerful. "You are always resigned and patient, and I am ever disposed to murmur. When will I learn the true secret of resignation to my Father's will?"

Looking toward my New Appointment.—Up to the close of Conference, I have kept faithfully the forty dollars reserved for the purchase of a horse so soon as I should reach my new circuit. But over and above that I have not five dollars, and wife and children all want new shoes, and my boots have given way at the side. They have been twice half soled, and the uppers wont stand it any longer. My only coat is all threadbare, and white at the seams. That, however, is no matter—it will look well enough back in the woods—although it has rather a shabby appearance here, among so many shining new black coats.

But, besides the absolute want of shoes and boots, it will cost us all of thirty dollars to get to our new home. Where, then, is the horse to come from? Be still, desponding heart! The Lord will provide. You go forth in his cause, and he will take care to supply the armor, if you will always keep it bright and whole! Yes—yes—weak, timid, trembling soldier of the Cross! The Captain of your salvation will go before you, and lead you on to certain victory. Only be faithful; look not back for a moment; but press forward.

I have just had a talk with brother T——. He called in very kindly to give me all the advice, encouragement, and instruction he could, in regard to my new appointment; and also to furnish me with a list of the names of some of the prominent brethren. There is no parsonage provided for the preacher's family. Nor do the people pay the rent for one. But a log cottage, he says, with a little patch of ground for a garden and pasturage, can be had for about twenty dollars a year. A cow will cost as much more. But where is the money to buy her to come from? Ah, me! If I had just about as much as it costs three or four of the sisters here for ribbons and laces, how rich I should be! The elegant dinner-set, upon which our food is served here every day, the good sister told my wife cost eighty dollars. There was a plainer set for sixty; but the first set had a gold band, and she liked it best, and so gave twenty dollars more for the sake of the gold band. Now, just the price of that gold band on the dinner-set would buy me a cow. Ah me! These thoughts trouble me. But hush! hush! poor doubting, murmuring heart! *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.* If the good Master has prospered our brother and sister in their basket and store, I ought to be thankful to him on their account, that he has given them the good things of life with a liberal hand.

I met old father H——y this morning, with his cowhide shoes and leather strings, wool hat, coarse coat, and shirt collar unbound with a neckcloth. It is two years since I last saw him. We talked for half an hour about matters and things. He is no happier than when I last met him. Not so happy I think. The luxurious living of our rich professors troubles his soul. He has lifted his voice against it faithfully, and enforced his precepts of temperance and moderation by a rigid self-denying example, but it is all of no avail. There is no diminution of the evil he complains of. His own perverse heart, too, causes him great affliction. The bitter things which he is daily compelled to write against himself, humbles his soul to the dust. He finds, he says, every day, lower and lower depths of evil in his own heart, the discovery of which fills his soul with the deepest anguish. Dear good old man! His troubles and his trials *here*, will, I trust, make him richer *there*. I cannot, however, coincide with him in all his positions—I cannot follow him in all his examples. The bounties provided by nature—her delicious fruits—sweet flowers—honey from the rock—were not all made in vain: or, only for those who look not for good things beyond this world. They are all for us, if in our power to obtain them, and, to me, it seems a greater sin to put aside the blessings thus provided by our Father's hand, than to receive them, and use them with thankfulness.

But he is sincere, and the Lord looks at the heart. I wish more of us had a portion of his self-denying spirit. I am sure I need some of it to enable me to bear up more patiently than I do. I wish I could never feel

troubled about any thing—that I could really say from the heart—"Thy will, not mine, be done." I often say as much with the lips—but, alas, it is, I fear, only from the teeth outwards.

I had written thus far in my journal, when wife came in, and holding a stout bundle in her hand said, with a pleasant, cheerful smile—

"What do you think this contains, dear?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," I said. "What does it contain?"

"You shall see," was her reply, as she unrolled it. There were three pairs of shoes a-piece for the children, and three pairs for wife, enough to last them all the next year. Then there were four frocks a-piece for the little ones, and four new gowns for wife, besides various other matters, such as muslin for underclothes, and nice warm canton flannel, and stockings!

"Not all for us?" I exclaimed, in astonishment, as Mary displayed these before my eyes.

"Yes, all for us. May the Lord reward sister A—— for her goodness,—we cannot." Tears of thankfulness were in her eyes.

"Amen!" I responded, fervently. In the next moment my heart smote me for what I had thought and written about the gold bands on the dinner-set. Several times since I have turned to the page of my journal where it lies recorded, and taken up my pen to erase it. But I have as often determined to let it remain. It presents a true history of my feelings, and I cannot blot it out.

After supper that evening—the last we were to spend in the kind family of brother and sister A——, brother A—— began to ask about my new circuit, and how I expect to get along on it. I felt a little delicacy about replying to his questions—for I could not speak very encouragingly, and I never like to make a poor mouth. But he was in earnest, and cornered me so closely that I had to tell all the truth about the means the circuit afforded, and my own poor condition.

"And so you still have your 'horse money' safe?" he said, smiling, after he had got all out of me.

"Yes, that still remains untouched. But a part will have to go for stage hire. That can't be helped. Though I doubt not, something will turn up, and that I shall get a horse after I get there easily enough. Horses don't cost much in that section of the country, and then to add to what is left after paying our fare, I hope to receive about ten dollars for the sale of some things at the old place, left in the care of a good brother. It will all come right, I know, brother A——. It always has come right"—

"No doubt," he said. "The Lord will provide."

Brother A—— seemed thoughtful after he had said this. After sitting for a little while, he said, rising,

"Come, brother B——."

I followed him up stairs, into his chamber. He closed the door, and then opened a large mahogany wardrobe, well stocked with clothes.

"You and I are near about the same size," he said, taking down a black frock coat that was very little worn. "Try on this and see how near it will come to fitting you. I have not worn it for some months, and it is a pity to let the moths get into it. There!" he continued, as I drew on the coat, "it fits you just as well as if it had been made for you, and scarcely shows the wear it has had. Let me see," he added, turning again to the wardrobe, "what else we have here. Ah! This is just the thing for you!" bringing out an overcoat, made of stout beaver cloth. "You

will want just such a thing as this next winter. It will keep you as warm as a toast while riding among them snowy hills. I found it 'most too heavy for me last winter. But to ride in it will be the dandy."

He did not stop here. Two pairs of good pantaloons, as many vests, and a pair of excellent boots, were added to these. I tried to thank him, but my voice was so husky that I could not articulate distinctly. The remembrance, too, of what I had thought and written down about the gold bands on the dinner-set, with other reflections not clothed in words, choked me. He did not stop here. Next morning as I shook hands with him, and bade him farewell, he left two pieces of coin in my hands, saying as he did so, with a smile—

"Don't touch the 'horse-money,' brother B——. A minister can't walk around his circuit."

Excellent man! May the Lord reward him! As for me, I feel humbled before my Master, for my want of faith. So many—many times has he brought me safely out of the wilderness into a clear place, and yet I am unwilling to trust him.

My New Field of Labor.—Rather a "hard country" this, as brother T—— said, truly. After staging it night and day for nearly four days, over bad roads more than half the distance, we arrived at M——, a small village included in the circuit. Several members of the church reside here. My wife was fatigued and almost sick when we got to this point. I left her and the children at the tavern, and went to look up some of the brethren. I had the names of two or three, and easily got their direction. Brother P—— was the first I called on. I found him in his saw mill, about half a mile from the village. He had not yet heard of the appointments. I showed them to him, and told him that I was the brother B—— whose duty it was to ride that circuit for the next conference year. He wanted to know if I had any family. When I said that I had, he replied that he was sorry. It was a hard circuit for even a single man: but he hoped it would do better for me than it had done for others. He then returned with me to the village, and had my wife and children taken to his house. He is an unlettered man, and lives in a very rough way, but both himself and wife were very kind to us. We staid with him two or three days, and I preached once and led the class meeting. Only six attended class, although there were twenty names on the class paper. Those present were all women, with a single exception. The meeting was very cold.

After learning all I could about the circuit, and the best position for me to settle down, we left M——. Brother P—— was kind enough to take us in a wagon and drive us ten miles to another settlement, that was in the centre of the district of country through which I had to travel. Here he advised me to hire a small log house—there are but few of any other kind—and fix my family as comfortably as I could. It so happened that there was only one house that I could get. It was built of hewn logs, chinked in with mortar, and had a stick chimney, and thatched roof.

Within, there were two rooms on the ground floor, and the loft above. One of the rooms below, was lathed and plastered. The other was not. Two acres of ground were fenced in around this poor tenement; but the plough or spade had not yet entered any portion of it. Poor Mary looked blank when we went into this house. I said nothing against it. It was our only chance. But none of our things had come yet, and could not possibly arrive for a couple of weeks, as I only wrote to brother S—— where to send them the day before we left P——.

In this settlement there are three Methodist families,—all poor. One consists of a widow, and two daughters nearly grown. Another of a man, his wife, and three little children; and the third of a man and his wife, both well advanced in years, and partly supported by the bounty of two sons who work on farms ten miles distant. The widow and her daughters kindly asked us to come and stay with them, until our things should arrive. We accepted the offer with thankfulness. Brother P—— then left us and returned home.

On the next day I found a man who had two horses to sell; for one he asked twenty dollars, and for the other thirty. They had been pretty well worked, but seemed healthy. The lowest priced one was an old horse, rather slow, but still to all appearance hardy. The other was a more spirited animal, and suited my fancy much better than the first one. I debated the matter for a whole day, and finally concluded to buy the cheapest horse, although I had a presentiment that he would prove the dearest in the end. As my own saddle and bridle had been left to come on with our beds, etc., I borrowed a saddle and bridle from the man who sold me the horse, and after giving five dollars to the poor widow to help her out in providing for my wife and children, committed them to the care of Him who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, and started on a three weeks ride through unknown ways about my new circuit. The first preaching place was ten miles off, and the day on which I started for it, in the morning, was, I had been informed, the regular day for preaching. I arrived at the meeting-house at half past ten o'clock; but found no one there. I hitched my horse, and tried the door, but it was locked. I then waited for an hour, but no one came. By this time I began to feel lonely and dispirited.

At length, after giving up all hope of seeing any one, I mounted my horse and rode away. But what certain direction to take, I knew not. I was a perfect stranger there, and did not know the residence of a single member. I had depended on seeing some of them at the meeting-house, and also upon getting from them my route to the next pleaching place, with all other necessary information. My horse proved a very slow beast, and stumbled frequently. Turning his head in the direction opposite to that from which I had come, I rode on in a state of uncertainty and despondency. The way was through dense woods, the tall forest trees, some at least a century old, throwing a dark shadow over all below. Sometimes, after ascending a long hill, I would get a brief glance of a wide, wild extent of country, all as thickly wooded as that in which I was wandering I knew not whither. Then the road would dive down into a deep, sombre valley, and wind along for miles, before it again afforded any thing like an extended prospect to the eye. For full three hours I kept steadily onward, but not a human face nor a human habitation met my view. At length I came to a place where the road forked. Which should I take? There was

no finger post; and if there had been, its indications would, doubtless, have been unintelligible to me. In my dilemma I looked up for direction. Then taking a piece of money from my pocket, I threw it up into the air, naming one side of it the left hand, and the other the right hand way. The *lot* was in favor of the right hand road, and so I took that. I had not gone far along this, before I perceived that it bent off until it took a course almost at right angles with the road I had been travelling, and was, if possible, more lonely and dark than that. But I passed onward, as fast as the weary animal under me could be made to go. Once, far away to the right, I saw, as I ascended a rising ground, a thin wreath of smoke curling up lazily from what appeared to be a break or clearing in the forest. But I did not attempt to gain it, for I dared not trust myself in the pathless wilderness that intervened.

At last, the sun declined low towards the horizon. A deer, frightened by the sound of my horse's feet, started off, near me, and went bounding fleetly away, and was soon lost to my view amid the tangled underwood. The sight of this animal suggested to my mind a thought that made the blood grow cold about my heart. Night was coming on, and I might yet be miles and miles away from any human habitation. There were bears and wolves among these mountains! Just as this fear began to oppress me, I heard a rustling in the low bushes close by the road, and, turning quickly, perceived a movement among them. My breath was instantly suspended, and my heart ceased to beat. The head of some animal immediately after protruded through an opening, and its large bright eyes became fixed upon me. In the next moment, a fawn went leaping away, less frightened, perhaps, than myself. The perspiration, as I caught my breath and the pulsations of my trembling heart were renewed, stood upon my forehead in large drops. For half an hour afterwards, every bird that fluttered among the bushes, every timid rabbit that rustled the dry leaves as it suddenly sprung away from the road side, every dry stick that cracked beneath my horse's feet, caused an instant suspension of my breath, any a quick throb of my coward heart.

Onward I rode, weary, hungry, and in alarm, lest I should be compelled to pass the night in the woods, exposed to imminent danger from wild beasts. At last the sun went down, and the dusky shadows of evening began to render four-fold more gloomy and dark, my lonely way, which, the farther I progressed, showed less and less indications of having been much or lately travelled. The thought of turning back, whenever it arose, was instantly dispelled—I had ridden since noon without having seen a human habitation, and now it was sundown. To press onward was my only hope. And onward I urged my poor beast, who held out far better than I at first dreamed he would, from the poor promise of the first few hour's ride. Darkness at length came down—darkness rendered deep and almost impenetrable from the dense foliage of the heavy forest trees that overhung the road, through the openings of which I could now and then get glimpses of the stars, and sometimes the principal members of a constellation, as here the "bands of Orion," and there the Pleiades,—Sirius, bright and smiling as the evening star—and ruddy Aldebaran, the crown of the Hyades. I had ridden on for nearly an hour after the night had closed in, when suddenly there arose, seemingly but a few hundred yards from me, upon the still air, a clear wailing cry like that of a distressed child. The blood fairly curdled in my veins. I reigned up my horse, suddenly. But every

thing was as silent as death. I sat motionless for several minutes in my saddle and listened. But the cry was not repeated. Touching the loose reign with my hand, I urged my old horse onward. Just as he had taken a step or two, clear, and distinct, and as it seemed, nearer, rose that strange cry again, thrilling every nerve in my body. Was it a child lost in the dreary wilderness? Was it some wild animal of which I had never heard? Or was it something supernatural? This thought, quickened by the repetition of the cry so strangely human, made the blood trickle through my veins, and the hair rise upon my head. And yet I am not a superstitious man. I am no believer in supernatural appearances. But, under all the peculiarities of my situation, I could not control my feelings, nor overcome the impression this last suggestion of my fears had made.

Without pausing again, I hurried onwards, that wailing cry coming after me every now and then most appealingly, yet growing fainter and fainter as I kept on my way. The feebler the sound became, as it continued to reach my ear, the more severely did my heart reproach me for inhumanity, in thus disregarding the agonizing cries of what might be a poor child lost in the woods. At length such thoughts became so active, and nature began to plead so loudly for the little wanderer, if such indeed it was, that as the faint, distant cry swelled upon the air again, I turned my horse's head quickly, determined to retrace my steps and recover the child. At this moment, my ear caught the distant barking of a dog. So cheering a sound I think I have never heard. My old horse distinguished it at the same moment, and turned his head resolutely in the direction from which it came. I laid the reins upon his shoulders, and prayed for guidance and protection to the God of Jeshuren. The animal moved off at a quick pace, directly into the woods, and soon emerged into a clear space. A light shone cheerfully from what I soon saw to be a log house standing in a portion of this clearing. A loud call brought an answering hallo from this lodge in the wilderness. It was the voice of a man! Blessed sound! How it thrilled my heart with joy!

In a few minutes I was at the door. As I dismounted, amid a group of two men, a woman, and what seemed a maid servant, three or four children and as many dogs, who all crowded around me, the woman who held a candle high above her head, ejaculated—

"Bless me! This must be our new preacher!"

"And so I am, sister!" I returned with a leaping heart, reaching out and grasping her hand—"God be thanked that I have got among friends and brethren!"

"Yes, God be thanked!" said the man, extending his hand and shaking mine heartily, "that you have reached our little clearing safely. A painter has been crying about all the evening—Hark! There! Don't you hear him?"

At that moment, far off, but clear and distinct, arose the cry I had taken for that of a lost child.

"It is a painter," the man added. "And he is not far from the road. If he had dropped down upon you, nothing could have saved you."

"Is that the cry of a panther?" I said, trembling at the thought of the danger I had escaped. "Why, I thought it was the cry of a lost child, and had just turned my horse's head to go in search of it, when my ear caught the barking of one of your dogs."

A warm and affectionate welcome, a good supper, and provender for my poor tired

horse, whose faithful service upon this our first acquaintance had already warmed my heart towards him, compensated in a good degree for the disappointments, fears, and fatigues of the day. It appeared, that, after riding from about twelve o'clock, until nine at night, I was still only eight miles, direct course, from the preaching place. I had come one day too soon. The regular appointment being for the day after that upon which I had been informed it was fixed.

A good bed, and a good night's sleep restored my wasted powers both of mind and body. Next morning we all started, soon after breakfast, on horseback, for the meeting house, which had been built by the several denominations residing within a circle of ten miles, and was used by all in turn. We plunged immediately into the woods, and pursued our course along a bridle path, which was so narrow, most of the way, that we had to ride in single file. In about two hours we reached the meeting-house. A number of horses hitched around gave indication that many of the brethren had already arrived. We found them standing about the door in groups, waiting for the preacher. They were no little surprised at seeing me come from the direction I did, and in company with the family of brother N——. This was briefly explained, and I received a good deal of sympathy. I found them all plain, rough farmers, but there was an honest kindness about them that pleased me very much. I preached from the text "Take no thought for the morrow." They listened with deep attention. After preaching, I led the class. It was, to my soul, a refreshing season.

After all the services were concluded, I felt very much inclined to return home with brother N—— and his excellent wife; but as to go to their house would take me just eight miles out of my way, I accepted the invitation of a good brother and sister, who lived just eight miles distant, *on* my direct road. With them I spent two days, most kindly entertained, and then, with more correct information as to the time of my next appointment, and the places of residence of brethren on the road, I bade them an affection farewell, and pressed onward in my journey.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, I reached the house of a brother L——, and staid there until the next morning. There was not much attention paid to my comfort. I suppose, however, they did the best they knew how. They appeared very poor, and were untidy in every thing. I could scarcely stomach the food set upon the table, for it was not clean. They put me to sleep in the loft, my bed upon the floor. But I slept soundly. In the morning I started again on my lonely ride. My horse did not go as freely as on the day before—he seemed dull, and stumbled frequently. Once he fell on his knees and came near throwing me over his head. I suspected the cause to be scanty feed. I was satisfied of this when I saw how greedily he took his oats at a log tavern I reached about twelve o'clock, and where I stopped more on old Tom's account than my own. The tavern-keeper would take nothing for either my horse's oats, or my dinner. Said he never charged the preachers. I thanked him warmly, at the same time that I put up a silent prayer that the Lord might bring him into the knowledge and life of his pure truth.

That night reached the house of brother M——, five miles from the preaching place for the next day. Was kindly received. Attended my appointment in the morning—brother M—— could not go, nor could any

of his family. Had to ride over alone. Preached to half a dozen men, and eight women. After service but three sisters remained to class. One of these was a widow. The husbands of the other two, non-professors, waited for them outside. It was a cold time. Found sixteen names on the class-paper. Shall have to enforce discipline, even if I offend some. The average attendance, I found, on examining the paper, had not been above eight for the whole year. No wonder so few attend preaching. So soon as a brother or sister becomes lifeless in matters of religion, class-meeting is neglected.

After class was over, I found that all the male members who had attended preaching had gone home. The two men, non-professors, who waited for their wives, took them, and departed likewise, and I was left alone with the poor old widow. She kindly invited me to go home and share with her the little she had; although she had nothing to give my horse. For my horse's sake I declined. Got from her the route to my next appointment, with the names of some brethren on the road, and bidding her farewell, moved onward. About four o'clock I reached a tavern and put up for the rest of the day and night. It was a vile place. The landlord was a drunken, swearing fellow, who paid not the least respect to my office as a preacher of righteousness. Several men came over at night, and staid until ten o'clock, drinking, swearing, and singing profane songs. My soul was exceedingly pained. The landlady was kind to me, and did all she could for my comfort. She seemed deeply mortified at the conduct of her husband, and I overheard her several times remonstrate with him, alluding to me at the same time. To this he always replied with an oath—

"—— the minister! What do I care for him? I'm as good as he is, or any of his tribe!"

In the morning I asked for my bill. The man was sober, and seemed ashamed of his brutal conduct on the night before. He declined taking any thing, and said—

"I shall always be glad to see you when you come this way. You mustn't mind my rough way last night. I'm not exactly myself after I have been drinking."

"Wouldn't it be better not to drink any, then?" I ventured to say.

"Perhaps it would. But I've got in the way of it now, and can't well help it," was his reply, a little impatiently.

I did not urge the matter, for I did not deem it best. In bidding farewell to the kind mistress of the house, I slipped into her hand a tract on temperance.

"Don't give it to him, but leave it in his way, sometime, when he is perfectly sober. It may do some good."

She looked her gratitude; but did not speak. I saw the reason. Tears were ready to gush from her eyes. We parted in silence. Poor wife! Thus alone in this wild country, and with a drunken husband! What but the grace of God that she so much needs can sustain her? I must stop here on my next round and see the effect of my tract.

* * * * *

Home again.—During the last week of my three weeks' journey I felt anxious about

my family. I had left them in a strange place, with a stranger. I was myself much worn down, and felt unwell. The circuit was a very large one, and the roads bad, and very fatiguing for my horse. I had seen little to encourage me, either spiritually or naturally. At some of my appointments only three or four attended. What pained me, particularly, was a disposition in many to find fault with my predecessor. Some had one thing to say against him and some another. I did not encourage this spirit, and thereby, I think, offended several of the brethren and sisters. But I can't help this. I dare not give a moment's countenance to evil. The most prominent cause of complaint was his severe discipline. Some of his strong rebukes to professors were repeated to me. They were, alas! too just. There seems to be but little spiritual life among this people.

Discouraged and depressed in spirits, and anxious about my family and my temporal affairs, I urged my weary beast homewards, after filling up my last appointment. I had met with several of the stewards, in my rounds, but none of them said any thing about the amount of support I might expect to receive, nor tendered me any thing on account of my salary, whatever it might be. They did not seem to think that their preacher might need a little money to carry him through his first quarter. If the brethren generally, would only reflect upon the matter, they would certainly be more considerate. The preacher's salary rarely, if ever, leaves him more than enough to get to conference, and after that to his new appointment. If with a family, he has, of course, been compelled to sell off a great many of his things—and the very ones that he is obliged to replace as soon as he gets to his new home. In nine cases out of ten he begins the quarter out of money and out of nearly every thing necessary for comfort and the sustenance of his family. And yet, he is too often made to wait until quarterly meeting day, before he gets any thing at all. During all that time his mind cannot but be harrassed—and worse than that, his family suffer many privations. Why don't the people think of these things?

Home at last! Thanks to my Heavenly Father, all are well! My wife is much more cheerful than I expected her to be. She says the poor widow and her daughters have been very kind to her. Our things have come, and also a letter from brother S—— enclosing twenty dollars, obtained for the sale of the things I left. Twenty dollars! I feared lest not over ten dollars would be got for them. Take courage, poor doubter! He that feedeth the young lions will feed thee.

I have now thirty-eight dollars in money, after paying freight and charges on my things. This will go a good way here, but still, it is a sum very inadequate to the supply of our wants for three months; especially, as we shall have to buy a good many things absolutely necessary to house-keeping.

I talked this matter over with Mary, yesterday—which was the day after I had gotten back. Neither of us can see how we are to get along. The house we looked at when we first came can be had for twenty-five dollars a year. We have determined to take it, for we do not think it right to burden our kind sister any longer. We shall have to buy a bedstead, and some chairs and kitchen things. Our crockery ware was packed in with our bedding. So that will not have to be replaced. But we want so many things that I do not see that we will have any mo-

ney left to live on after we get fixed. But, doubtless, the Lord will provide. He has never yet forgotten us. *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

Well! we are in our new abode, and quite snugly fixed. Things look much more comfortable than I could have expected. And what is better, five dollars is all the money we have yet found it necessary to lay out. Mary frankly told Sister E——, at whose house we have been staying, just how we were situated. She at once saw the rest of our friends here, and the three families joined together and most generously loaned us all they could spare towards fitting up a house. It makes my heart run over with gratitude to see their noble emulation. From each family, we had sent us two chairs, making six. These were all we needed. Then one brought us a pot, and another a pan, and so on, until we were supplied with nearly every article necessary for our comfort. A common pine table, costing a dollar and a quarter, was as good to us, as a mahogany one that would cost ten dollars. A family in the settlement had a bedstead which they wished to part with. Three dollars and a half procured this. The children's bed for the present is made up on the floor. Sister E—— has a good cow, and more milk than she wants. She says, we mustn't think of buying a cow at present. That we can have just as much milk as we need, if I will pay half what the cow's feed costs, and half the price of keeping her through the next winter; by which we will save just the cost of a cow, and just half the cost of keeping her! That settles the business of the cow, that has troubled my mind a great deal. I couldn't help again thinking of the twenty dollars it cost for the gold bands on Sister A——'s dinner-set, and how I had allowed myself to covet the money she had thus expended, that I might be able to buy me a cow. But I have no need of one now—I am better without one, for, besides the price to be paid in her purchase, it would cost me just twice as much to keep her as it will now cost me for all the milk I want. True, there is the butter she would have made us, which I shall have to buy. But we can easily do without that, if necessary. It is only a luxury.

Brother D—— came over this morning He says he shall have a few idle days during the next week, and will bring his horse and plough, and break up my lot for me, and help me plant a part of it in potatoes. He has plenty of seed. He will also help me lay out a garden, and get every thing that is necessary into the ground. Could I ask more? May the good Lord sow many precious seeds in his heart, and water them with the dews of heavenly grace!

Two weeks have passed, and I must again be absent from home. I shall leave my family very comfortable, and in the care of kind sisters, who have already become much attached to my wife. She always makes friends. That mild, gentle face, and those earnest, sincere, yet unimpassioned tones, soon win their way to the heart. Sister E——'s oldest daughter will stay with her in my absence.

With what different feelings do I start out to ride around my circuit now! *Bless the Lord, Oh, my Soul! and forget not all his benefits.* Poor doubter that I am! When I can see the bright sun and feel his warmth, I can believe that he is in the sky. But when clouds gather about his radiant face, and hide him from my view, I tremble lest he has vanished from the heavens, and will never again

look smilingly down upon me. I often repeat to myself—

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense—
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour,
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower;"

and try, as I do so, to realize, in my own heart the confidence these lines so sweetly express. While I feel their inspiring influence, I think I will never again have one distrustful thought. But, alas! No sooner does the sky become overcast, and the waters become troubled, then, like sinking Peter, I begin to cry out in despair. When shall I obtain the grace that will enable me to honor my Master by trusting in his sure word of promise, in sickness or in health, in prosperity or in adversity, in life or in death? For this degree of grace I daily pray.

First Quarterly Meeting.—Three months have passed away, and our first quarterly meeting has been held. I wish I could say that it has strengthened my hands. Attendance very thin. Only two stewards present, and not over one third of the class leaders. I had little power in preaching, for the people seemed to have no faith. Warmed up in the love-feast. My own soul much refreshed. A few of the sisters were melted to tears.

Only received thirty-five dollars. Stewards sorry it wasn't more—but had done the best they could to make collections. The people were very poor. Some of them didn't see that much money in a whole year. Hoped I would be able to get along until next quarterly meeting, when a better collection would no doubt be made. Get along! Oh, yes, I shall get along. Have always got along, thanks be to Him who feedeth the ravens. True, all my money has been gone for some weeks, and I have been compelled to run up a bill at the store—how often have I resolved never to do that again—but the Lord will provide. He has never yet failed me. Potatoes don't cost much, and they make wholesome food. Wife is a good economist, and turns every thing to best account. But what could the people be thinking about? Only thirty-five dollars to keep me for six months—three months before, and three months after the payment—How do they think I can live? Suppose I had not, providentially, had about forty dollars in money when I came on the circuit, a thing unusual for a Methodist preacher? What would my poor wife and children have done? But hush! hush! unhappy doubter! *Providentially you had about forty dollars*, and has not all things needful for you been provided?

Second Quarterly Meeting.—Money out four weeks ago. Bill at the store again. Sister E——'s cow has gone dry! Havn't

had any milk for children for several days. Little Mary said, this morning—"Pa, I don't like this hominy—I'd rather have mush and milk. Why don't you buy a cow? You used to have a cow." It hurt me a good deal.

"I think we'd better give up our coffee, dear," I said to wife after breakfast, instead of drinking coffee ourselves buy milk for the children."

But wife said no. It was not for herself that she said this, but for me. She knew how almost indispensable to me was my cup of coffee. I urged the matter. But she remained resolute. We were yet debating the question, when sister D—— called in. She said she had just heard that sister E——'s cow had gone dry, and that, of course, we had been without milk for nearly a week. She brought over half a gallon, and said we could have a pint night and morning from her cow as well as not.

All in good time again! Thanks to Him who put the generous thought into the mind of sister D——.

Started next day for quarterly meeting. Brother G——, Presiding Elder, attended. Enquired how I had got along, and how much quarterage I had received. Couldn't give a very flattering account. Brother G—— preached. Was pretty severe on the people for their neglect of duties—especially in regard to their minister's temporal wants. Offended several. Got thirty dollars this time. Returned home much depressed in spirits. Found wife down with a fever, and out of her head. Went for the doctor—three miles. He did'nt seem very willing to come; but couldn't refuse. Poor prospect of making much money out of the preacher. Some experience in that line, no doubt. Fever continued to rage for several days, and my heart to tremble for the result. But the Lord raised her up. Blessed be his holy name! Paid bill at the store; had eighteen dollars left for all expenses during next three months. But these will be lighter. A good crop of potatoes, and corn, and beans, with other vegetables, and our milk given to us, will go a good way towards supplying our wants. Wife don't care about meat, and I am away from home two-thirds of the time. Won't be much to buy. Clothes hold out very well, thanks to brother and sister A—— of conference memory. May they have golden bands around every thing—yea, about their very hearts!

Had to leave home while wife was still very feeble. Felt anxious. Gone three weeks,—met in some places with rather a cold reception. People didn't like brother G——'s home talk. It isn't every one that can bear to have his faults too plainly pointed out. As I drew near home again, began to be fearful. Thought—"Suppose wife has had a relapse and died?" The cold sweat oozed from every pore at this. I looked up and prayed for grace! Tried to have confidence in my Heavenly Father. But poor human nature plead too strongly. I could not think of losing my companion, and at the same time say from my heart—*Thy will be done.*

After preaching at the last appointment ten miles from home, I declined all invitations to dine and stay all night. Mounting my horse, I pushed him into a quick trot, and kept on at that speed all the way home. He made the distance in an hour and a half. When I came in sight of my house, I was in a fever of anxiety. As I drew near, I perceived the door to be shut, and the window blinds down. No living creature was visible. This strengthened my worst fears. I soon gained the house, hitched my horse at the garden fence, and threw open the gate.

I had made two or three rapid strides up the walk, when the door was quickly opened, and a dear smiling face presented itself, upon which were no traces of illness! Crowding past their mother rushed out my two little ones, making the air resound with their glad voices. I took them in my arms—mother and children, and thanked God for all his mercies.

Third Quarterly Meeting.—A very good time. Six probationers taken into full membership. One a farmer, well to do in the world. My old swearing tavern-keeper, and his wife were present. She told me that the tract on temperance I had left with her, had awakened his mind to a sense of his real condition. It had been like a nail in a sure place. He had not taken a drop of liquor since. About a month ago he gave up tavern keeping, and commenced farming, his old business. She seemed very happy. He was the best of men, she said, when he did not drink. *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this, or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

Stewards seemed more cheerful. Paid me sixty dollars. This is better than I had expected. Could get along on sixty dollars a quarter well enough.

Begin to look forward again to Conference, three months more, and my labors will close here. Can't say that I shall feel much reluctance in going away. And yet, I have met with many good people on the circuit, [redacted] shall be sorry never to see again. [redacted]e good I have done, very little is apparent. Last year, fifty new members were added to the church on my circuit. I thought that a poor addition. Thus far only twelve have been taken on probation here, and two of them did not stand out their six months' trial. I have been, indeed, but an unprofitable servant—troubled more about my own temporal welfare than the salvation of souls.

Fourth and last Quarterly Meeting.—Thinly attended. Only three official members—two stewards and one leader—present. Could pay me but twenty-five dollars. Regretted it very much. But people didn't get much money, and let it go reluctantly. Twenty-five dollars! When I counted over this meagre sum, I felt choked. I tried to express my thanks for the poor pittance, but the words stuck in my throat.

Twenty-five dollars! What shall I do? My bill at the store is nearly that. And the doctor, besides attending my wife through

her illness with fever, has been called in several times to the children. I cannot expect *him* to doctor me for nothing. In two weeks we must leave for Conference, and pay stage hire for two hundred miles. Twenty-five dollars! And there is a quarter's rent to be paid—six dollars and a quarter. But idle despondency will not accomplish any thing. I must up and be doing.

My bill at the store was just twenty dollars. Not many charges against me for luxuries. Paid it, and took a receipt. Enough money left to pay the rent. That has been settled. And now what is there left for the doctor? Nothing! Yes, there is the old horse. But what shall I do on my next circuit? I can't walk around it. And if I sell my horse to pay the doctor, where will the money come from to pay stage fare to Conference? Truly, I am in a great strait. But why should I feel troubled? All will come out right. The Captain of our salvation will not send his faithful soldier out to battle at his own charge. But have I been a faithful soldier? Alas! no. And there lies the ground of my want of confidence. If I had been as faithful as I should have been, I would not fear.

Well! I have been to see the doctor. I *rode* over, and *walked* home. He looked grave when he saw me. He knew my errand, and expected, no doubt, a poor mouth, if not a declaration that I had nothing to pay him. When I asked for his bill, he took it from his desk, and handed it to me. It was already made out. He knew the conference year was up. How, I don't know, for he is not a member of our church. The bill was twelve dollars. Not a heavy or unreasonable charge.

"I am going to sell my horse, Doctor," I said, after learning the amount due, "and will then settle your bill."

This did not seem to satisfy him. He sat with his eyes upon the floor for some moments, and then said—

"How much do you expect to get for your horse?"

"I can't tell, Doctor," I replied. "I paid twenty dollars for him, and he has turned out better than I expected. I suppose he ought to bring the same that I gave for him."

"Let's look at him," he said, rising and going towards the door.

"Not much to brag of!" he remarked, half contemptuously, after eyeing my poor old horse for a little while.

I felt somewhat indignant, more at his manner than his words. I had become attached to my horse, and could not bear to hear him spoken of so lightly.

"He is a patient beast, and can endure much fatigue," I replied.

"Has he no fault?" As the doctor asked this, he eyed me with a penetrating look, evidently to detect any thing like a falsehood in my reply. This for a moment made me feel an emotion of anger; but in the next I had forgiven him. Poor man! Did he think I would put my soul in jeopardy for a few dollars?

"He has but one serious fault," I returned. "He stumbles."

"He stumbles, does he! A dear bargain at any price, if he should break his owner's neck!"

"He has not broken my neck," I said.

"No—but he may do it before you get home with him. The pitcher that has been to the well ninety-nine times may be broken at the hundredth time."

"Very true. But I am not in any concern on that account."

"Well, what do you expect to get for him?"

"I shall try and get as much as I gave for him."

"You'll not be able to do that. An old broken down hack like him don't bring good prices in these parts. You paid too much for him by five dollars."

"Do you think so?" I asked.

"Certainly I do. And more than that, I know so. I could have bought him for fifteen dollars the day before you gave twenty for him.

This information pained me a good deal; not on account of the five dollars I had overpaid, but because a man, who had given me every reason to think well of him since I had lived here, should have deliberately done so evil an act, as to charge me, a poor preacher, five dollars more for a horse, than he had offered him for only the day before.

"If you choose," said the Doctor, "I will take your horse at fifteen dollars, and pay you the difference between that sum and my bill. You will find it hard to make a sale of him, I am inclined to think."

This offer I had the decision of mind at once to decline. The doctor was not pleased at my refusal. And I thought there was something in his manner that said I didn't intend to pay him if I could help it. I felt this deeply. But my determination was fixed.

"If you choose to take him at twenty dollars, and pay me the difference, you can do so," I replied. "If not; I shall make the effort to sell him elsewhere, and then settle your bill."

Seeing that I was in earnest, after grumbling a good deal, he finally paid me eight dollars in money, receipted my bill, and took my horse. I then walked home, a distance of some three miles, thankful that my doctor's bill was off of my mind, and quite disposed to look up for aid.

On the next day met a man riding my old horse. Stopped him, and asked what he had paid. Twenty-five dollars, he said. Doctor —— had asked thirty, but twenty-five was all he would give. Thought he had made a very good bargain. Told brother D—— what I had done, and what the doctor had said about the horse having been offered at fifteen dollars. Found that this was not so—that twenty-five had been asked for the animal, before I came, and that the owner put the price to me at twenty because I was a preacher. Doctor ——, he said, was a great lover of money, and had been known to sell a widow's cow more than once for his fee!

Unhappy man! If thy soul should be required of thee this night, whose would all these things be, that thou art setting thy heart upon? How will all these read, when thy book of life is opened in the other world? Lord, touch his heart with the finger of thy love, and melt it down with emotions of human sympathy. *What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

In five days more we must start for P——. But how are we to get there? Only five dollars in money, and my wife must have a new bonnet. She cannot go to conference in that old, soiled, misshapen thing, which has already been worn for two years. Her clothes are in a poor state. But there is no remedy for that. Shoes will have to be bought. Well, what is to be done? Sell our beds and bedding? What else can we do? I have no money to go to Conference, and yet I must go there. Wife couldn't bear this thought. The beds had been given to her by her mother when we were married.

"We shall want beds just as much on our new circuit as on this," she said—

"True, Mary. But how are we to get

there? And you know we can't stay here. This is no longer our home. Our only course is to go to Conference, and trust to the Lord beyond that. He has taken care of us thus far, and will not leave us nor forsake us."

While we were yet talking, brother P—— came in. He had ridden over from M—— to tell me, that there was a school vacant, with an income of four hundred dollars, that could be had for me, if I had any wish to *locate*. I saw Mary's face brighten at this intelligence, particularly as brother P—— went on to describe the neat little cottage provided for the teacher, with its garden, shrubbery, and fruit trees. How my poor heart fluttered! Here was an offer of ease and competence, with the blessed privilege of being always with my family. On the other hand, all was doubt and uncertainty. I was reduced to the lowest ebb. Yearly had my little means wasted away, and I was growing poorer and poorer. My horse was gone, and the money expended, and I must sell my bed and bedding in order to get the means whereby to reach Conference. The temptation was strong.

I told brother P—— that I would decide the next day. He said he would come over again and learn my decision, urging me at the same time to accept the offer. As soon as he had left the house, I took Mary's hand, without speaking, and led her back into our parlor and bed room, and after closing the door, knelt down with her by my side, and prayed most fervently to the Lord to guide us in this crisis, to the knowledge of his will. We then arose, and I said—"Mary, let us be on our guard. This may be only a temptation for the trial of our faithfulness. We have put our hands to the gospel plough. Let us be careful how we look back. Hitherto the Lord has helped us. We have had many fears, and have too often suffered ourselves to fall into doubt and distrust. But out of every trouble the Lord has brought us. He has often made our desert to blossom as the rose, and sent unto our thirsty land, springs of water. And he will still do it. Are there no precious souls to save, no foes of the church to conquer, that we feel so willing to lay off the armor, and put up the sword? Does the world lie no longer in the power of the Wicked One? Is the command, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature* no longer in force?

I paused. Mary had already laid her head, as was her wont, when her spirit became oppressed with pain, or struggled violently in temptation, upon my bosom. The tears were flowing freely from her eyes. She made no reply—and I continued—

"Having started in the race, shall we look back? Once upon the house top, shall we descend to take any thing out of the house? Having tasted of heavenly manna, shall we turn back unto the flesh pots of Egypt? Soon will this toilsome strife be over—and then how sweet, how blessed will be the Master's voice—*Well done, good and faithful servants! enter ye in to the joy of your Lord.* Let us fall—when fall we do—with our loins girt about, and our feet shod; with our armor bright, and the sword of the spirit in our hands. A watchman on the walls of Zion, with enemies of the church within and without, I feel that I dare not give up my place. A soldier of the cross with the battle yet to win, and the legions of satan thronging to the contest, I dare not make an inglorious retreat. If fall I must, let it be with my face to the foe. Our blessed Lord endured even the death of the cross for us. And shall the servant be greater than his master? No—no. Let us patiently bear the cross and endure the pain—His word will support

us. Every thing looks dark a-head. The sky is full of clouds—the thunder rolls heavily above—the waves are mountain high, and we seem just about to strike upon the foaming and roaring breakers. But why give way to childish fears?—*Our Captain's at the helm!* Will he not guide our frail bark safely over? He will, Mary, he will. Let us still trust Him!"

As I said this—my own spirit reassured—my own heart warmed with reviving confidence. My wife lifted her head from my bosom and looked me in the face. A holy calm pervaded her countenance. There were no tears in her eyes, although they yet glistened upon her cheeks.

"I am ready to go with you to prison or to death!" she said, earnestly. "If we would wear the crown, we must endure the cross. Blessed be His holy name, that we did not fall in *that* temptation!"

For the rest of that day, my heart glowed with heavenly confidence. I was on a spiritual mountain, with the air around me untainted by any thing earthly. When brother P—— came to get my answer, I was enabled to say *no*, without a struggle.

Starting for Conference again.—We have had an auction, and sold off every thing except our clothes. But few attended the sale, and there was little competition in bidding. After paying for hand-bills, giving notice of the sale, and the auctioneer's commission, I had thirty dollars. Five dollars of this sum have been spent in procuring some necessary things—among them a new bonnet for wife. We are now all ready and about starting, with money enough to take us to P——, and but little over. Well, it is my duty to go to Conference, and the Lord has provided the means to take me there. Beyond that let me trust Him. He will not forsake me.

Conference.—I could not help feeling a wish to be assigned to the family of brother and sister A——. But it has been ordered otherwise. We are not so pleasantly situated. But have no cause of complaint. To meet once more with my brethren strengthens me much.

Last Day.—Appointments have been read. I have prayed hard, during the whole season, that the Lord would keep me resigned to his will—To send me any where that He

might think best. Mary, too, has been patient and willing to trust the Good Master.

"Well, dear," she said, in a quiet voice, when I came in, while a placid smile was upon her face, "to what part of the Lord's vineyard are we to go next?"

"To E——," I said, as calmly as I could speak.

For that she was not prepared. The tears came into her eyes, that were instantly turned upwards. Then leaning her head against me, as I sat down by her side, she murmured. "He has been far better to us, than all our fears. Weak, doubting, unfaithful servants that we have been! But —"

And as that *but* was uttered in a changed voice, in which the doubts she had just condemned were too plainly apparent, she lifted her head and looked at me with concern upon her face.

—"But how can we go to E——? On a *station* the minister's family must live in some kind of respectability, and we havn't a dollar with which to buy furniture."

"H-u-s-h!" I replied laying my fingers upon her mouth. "The parsonage is furnished expressly for the preacher."

Mary's head again fell upon me—"Poor, weak, distrustful murmurer!" she half whispered. "When wilt thou learn thy lesson of confidence?"

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